



# Nena News

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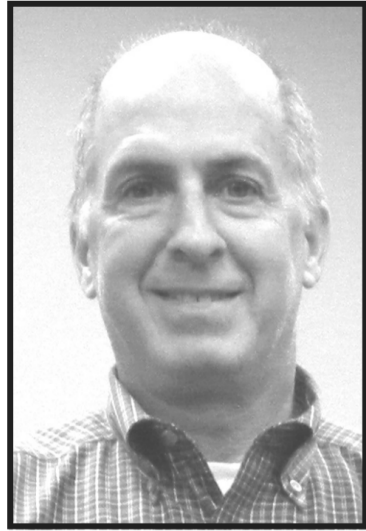
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# President's Message

—  
William Harkins



I would like to start by thanking you our members for your support through your membership and donations to our programs. This is your organization in order to make it successful we need your participation whether you fill a vacancy on our board, submit a news article, place an exhibit, bring a child to our Y.N Program or just drop by the club table during one of our events and say hello. I am also asking our members and clubs to promote our organization and help bring in new members.

Our 77th, Conference and Convention was a great success and included a Young Numismatist table set up adjacent to the club table. The club table was busy with members and visitors purchasing this year's medals, paying dues and discussing club activities. The Exhibits Gallery had several really nice displays. The Annual Meeting included the exhibit awards and election of officers. This was also a good opportunity for me to visit with our member dealers and say hello. Read further in this issue for a full report of the activities.

After twenty years as our news editor Joe Duval has decided to step down from the position for personal reasons. We thank Joe for his service and dedication as our editor and publisher of NENA News, 2001 through June 2021 and wish him well. I am happy to report that we have  
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recruited two very capable individuals to edit and publish the newsletter and welcome aboard Christopher Bulfinch and Tyler Rossi. We have also contracted with a new printer Gulemo Printers, Willimanic, CT.

Please help we are in need of a State Director for Rhode Island. If you know anyone that you think might be a good candidate for our Board, please asks them to consider taking a position with us. We now meet via conference call to save on travel expenses and time and only meet about eight times a year for an hour or so on Saturday mornings.

If you haven't visited our website lately, please do the site has been updated with information pertaining to our activities, Club listings and announcements. For more information visit us at [www.nenacoin.org](http://www.nenacoin.org). If you have any ideas or suggestions on how we may better serve you, please let us know. You may email me at [williamharkins@comcast.net](mailto:williamharkins@comcast.net) or by mail NENA, P.O. Box 2061, Woburn, MA 01888.

Sincerely,  
William Harkins

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# Editor's Corner

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Hello NENA members! My name is Tyler Rossi, and I am one of the new editors of NENA News. First, let me introduce myself. I am from a small town called Manchester by the sea and am currently a graduate student at Brandeis University's Heller School of Social Policy and Management studying Sustainable International Development and Conflict Resolution. Before graduating

from American University in Washington D.C., I worked for Save the Children creating and running international development projects. Right before the Covid pandemic, I returned to the US from living abroad in the Republic of North Macedonia, where I served as a Peace Corps volunteer for three years.

As an avid numismatist for over a decade, I have cultivated a deep interest in pre-modern and ancient coinage from around the world. Currently, I am a freelance writer for the Coin Week website. As an editor of the NENA News publication, I will be using this column as form of "From the Editor's Desk" forum to discuss a variety of topics. These will include interesting coins I have recently found, relevant numismatic news, interesting archeological finds, etc.

In terms of NENA, I hope to use my position to promote the organization and to provide its members with interesting numismatic information and timely news on local clubs and shows. I am always available by email ([tmrossi94@gmail.com](mailto:tmrossi94@gmail.com)) if you want to discuss article submissions or any other numismatic topics.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from all of you in near future,  
Tyler Rossi

Hello NENA News readers,

My name is Chris Bulfinch, I am a numismatic writer and NENA member from Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA. After graduating from Trinity College in 2018, I moved to Sidney, Ohio to work as an Associate Editor at Coin World. I moved back to New England in the fall of 2019 and continue to contribute to Coin World, as well as CoinWeek, The Numismatist, and PCGS Rare Coin Market Report. Since the start of 2021, I've worked as a Staff Writer for CoinWeek and contributed to the newest edition of Whitman Publishing's American Silver Eagles: A Guide to the U.S. Bullion Coin Program.



I am very excited to be editing NENA News with Tyler Rossi, a great colleague and old friend. He and I attended our first coin show together, the Bay State in 2007 or 2008 - we couldn't remember which - for the Coin Collecting Merit Badge. I'm lucky to have such a thoughtful fellow numismatist helping me edit NENA News. As editor, I would like to encourage NENA members to suggest topics for articles and, if there is a subject about which they are passionate, write something. I want for the pages of this publication to serve as a forum for NENA members to share original research, passion projects, and reports from local clubs and/or shows.

I would like to write and/or publish pieces about NENA's clubs, including shows, notable lectures, club histories, and member profiles. If your club has something cool going on, I'd love to hear about it and publish a write-up in here. We won't be able to cover everything, but I want to report on local numismatic news that might otherwise go uncovered.

If I can be of any help or you have any thoughts, please do not hesitate to reach out. Send me an email at [christopherbulfinch@gmail.com](mailto:christopherbulfinch@gmail.com). I'm grateful for the opportunity to be involved with NENA and look forward to getting to know you, its members, in the days ahead.

Sincerely,  
Chris

## **New England Numismatic Association** **Highlights from our 77th, Conference and Convention**

Our 77th Conference & Convention was held in conjunction with the New Hampshire Coin & Currency Expo on Saturday Oct. 2nd, 2021. Activities included the exhibits, club table, “What is it? Table”, Y/N table, and Annual Meeting that included the awards and officer elections.

This year due to the pandemic our traditional Y.N. Program was canceled and in its place we set up a Young Numismatist table adjacent to the club table. The table was set up on both days of the expo and had many numismatic items that were given out to the youngsters including U.S. coins, world coins, world banknotes, books and supplies. There was also a free raffle on Saturday for some of the larger donations that we received from the dealers and club members.

This year’s exhibits were outstanding we had three exhibits with a total of ten cases. There was a four case Non-Competitive exhibit that highlighted the history of NENA News. The other exhibits included a three-case exhibit titled “Twenty Views of Mount Fuji” and a three-case exhibit titled “Which Decade? An elongating experiment”.

Bob Fritsch won the Elliott Goldberg Best of Show Award for his exhibit titled “Which Decade? An elongating experiment” and received an acrylic plaque and a 1/10 oz. gold eagle; Christopher Blackington



was the runner-up with his exhibit “Twenty Views of Mount Fuji” and received a one-ounce silver eagle; Christopher Blackington also received the People’s Choice Award with his exhibit on “Twenty Views of Mount Fiji” and was given an engraved plaque and a silver eagle. The committee appreciated the time taken by the Judges to evaluate the exhibits and thanks them for their efforts.

The Annual Meeting took place from 3:00 - 4:00 P.M. and was open to members and non-members alike. The meeting started with President Harkins welcoming everyone and calling the meeting to order. We discussed our activities and the show that included the Club table, Y.N. table, “What is it Table” and the exhibits. We then presented the exhibit awards and thanked everyone for their time and efforts with the exhibits.

The Elections resulted in the following changes to our board: Michael Viens was elected to the Treasurer’s position. Stanley Sobiech was elected to a director’s position. We then held the drawings for the door prizes that included a 2021 Silver Eagle and the 2021 NENA medals set.



We would like to thank all those that helped make this a successful event including our board, committees, volunteers and members. Ernie Botte and EBW Promotions for providing the exhibit space, club tables and meeting room for our event; The dealers and club members for their generous donations of coins, medals, tokens and supplies for the Y/N’s.

Thank You!



# Identities of Two Fictitious Native American Characters Come to Light in Vignettes on Obsolete U. S. Paper Money

By C. John Ferreri



Figure 1 - Obverse of \$2.00 bill printed by the Bank of Hartford County, 1861

Paper money vignettes often pose identification problems. While some actually have the title of the artwork engraved alongside the vignette, this is not always the case. Sometimes a vignette was chosen and the description omitted or misplaced, because it just was not important to that particular bank. The bank note above is striking, especially with the large green counter “overprint”. Unfortunately, it does not appear clearly in this black and white publication. The right-hand vignette depicting a bucolic scene around a waterfall is what this article is about; identification of the statuary on the left is a project for another day.

Identifying the subjects on the face of state-sanctioned or “U.S. obsolete currency” can seem like an endless pursuit. These paper bills, sanctioned by states but ignored by the Federal government, were at times worth less than a “Continental” and have become a collecting bonanza for

*Continued on next page*

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astute collectors with good historical knowledge. Sixty years ago there was little market for these bills. Many of their vignettes went unidentified and many counterfeit and spurious examples were left unattributed. Two pioneers in the field, Dr. John Muscalus and David C. Wismer, were able to identify some of the vignettes and published them in their writings. Even today, some vignettes elude identification. Banknote companies and engravers must have known why they were asked to engrave certain scenes or subjects, and in some cases titled the vignettes so they could be identified in the future.

However, the people and events depicted in the vignettes were mostly not identified in writing on the note(s) itself/themselves. The owners of these bills, if interested at all, would have needed a good store of knowledge to figure out what he or she was actually looking at. How could the average Joe know that he was looking at an engraving of “Iran-istan”, the Persian-themed Mansion built in Bridgeport, Conn. by P.T. Barnum, or the engraving of a historic and brutal murder in upstate New York of Jane McCrea? It wasn’t easy and these vignettes take time to research and attribute.

The banknote at the head of this article features an intricately engraved waterfall scene as one of the two main vignettes. This attractive note was issued by the Bank of Hartford County in Hartford, Connecticut. One quickly notices the two Native American figures, with the male



Figure 2 - 2\$ Bank of Minnesota note printed in 1857. Printed courtesy of Heritage Auctions



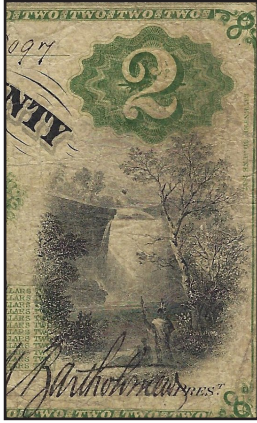


figure standing in front of the waterfall, and the female seated on the ground next to him. This is not as common a vignette as often appears on most notes issued by this bank. As hard as I tried, I couldn't attribute the rustic vignette to an area of Hartford or even that general area of Connecticut. Identifying it became a challenge that took well over a year for me to solve.

Without being able to locate descriptions or titles of the vignettes,

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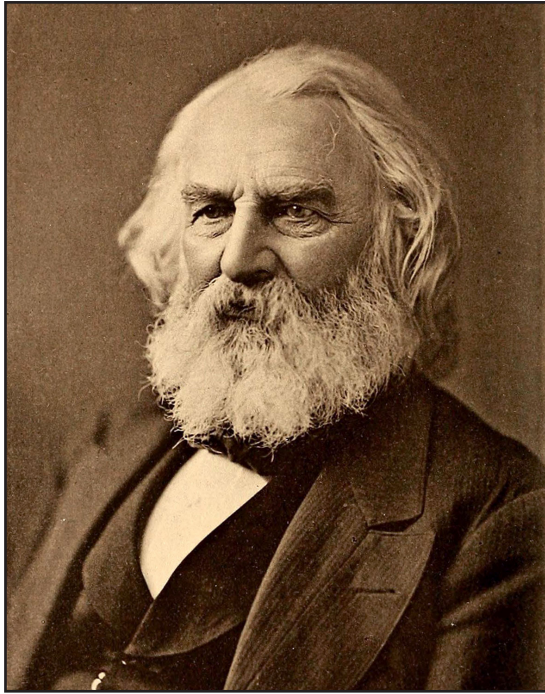


Figure 7 - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

neither the statue nor the waterfall could be identified initially. However, while browsing through the R. Shawn Hewett book *A History and Catalog of Minnesota Obsolete Bank Notes & Scrip* (2006), which features plenty of pictures of notes from Minnesota, I found a match. This vignette had also been used on \$2 notes of the Bank of Minnesota in the city of Saint Paul (please see illustration above). Looking at the images of both the Hartford and St. Paul notes, I realized that the engraver in this case, American Bank Note Co. of New York, must have held title to the vignette die and was able to offer its use to any bank that wanted it.

So, what waterfall was I looking at? Were those two Native Americans important to the engraved theme? Yes, they and the waterfall were very important in identifying the scene in the vignette! The waterfall's name became evident as the previously named Minnehaha Falls and then the identity of the two Native Americans came to light.

Portland, Maine's Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was an estab-

lished and well-read American poet of the mid-1800s. In 1855, only a few years before these banks issued their notes, he completed an epic poem about a fictitious Ojibwa warrior named Hiawatha and his female Dakota companion and love, Minnehaha. This poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*, quickly became an American classic. These two banks evidently thought the vignette showing the two Native Americans and the waterfall would be a good subject to place on their notes. The name Minnehaha when translated from the Native tongue means, “waterfall” or “dancing waters”. The place shown in the vignette of the notes is the falls at the not-yet-named Minnehaha Park in Minneapolis. The engraver precisely portrayed the falls and surroundings which can be seen when comparing the different images above, leaving little if any chance of ambiguity as to the identification of the visual content.

Jacob Fjelde, a Norwegian sculptor then living in Minnesota, created a plaster sculpture depicting Hiawatha and Minnehaha for the Minnesota Building at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. A bronze version of Fjelde’s work was placed in Minnehaha Park above the falls in 1912.

I was later surprised to note that the vignette (Minnehaha Falls) used on these notes had never before been attributed or identified on paper money or in any of the paper money references as I am now doing in this issue of NENA News. There is no mention of it in either the Hewett book or its predecessor, *Minnesota Obsolete Notes and Scrip* by R.H. Rockholt, 1973. While I have not been able to find corroborating proof of the two Native subjects’ identity in the engraved scene in the U.S. Obsolete Bank Notes book, it certainly seems reasonable to claim that these vignettes show the fictitious characters, Hiawatha and Minnehaha of Longfellow’s poem posing at the base of Minnehaha Falls in Minneapolis. The area around the falls and along the creek is now a preserve in the city of Minneapolis named Minnehaha Regional Park. The fact that the park, the poem, and the vignettes are intertwined makes for a beautiful American story. Longfellow never actually visited this site, but if he knew his poem was the cause of his two subjects being included in this banknote vignette I’m sure he would have been pleased. ♦

# Both a Circulating Gold and Modern Bullion Coin

## “The British Sovereign”

---

By Mark Benvenuto



1820 Gold Sovereign obverse



1820 Gold Sovereign reverse

When it comes to collecting United States gold, there are plenty of options. A person could focus on the gold coins of the modern commemorative program, and end up with an impressive collection of \$5 half eagles, as well as a few \$10 gold eagles. Some of them are quite affordable. Or, they could decide to build a collection of gold bullion U.S. Eagles, and have to decide whether or not to stick with high or low denomination pieces. But among all the gold that is out there, one series that is too often overlooked is a foreign one, the British gold sovereign. Let's see what sort of options a person has when it comes to these gold pieces from across “the Big Pond.”

Today British gold sovereigns, including older issues, are often bought, sold, and traded as bullion coins despite their unusual precious metal content. Each piece contains 0.2354 ounce of gold and it's a fair bet most of us cannot compute multiples of that in our head.

But the trade-off here is just how much history the coins have. Af-

ter all, the United States gold Eagles, the Canadian gold Maple Leaves, and all the other bullion coins only have histories stretching back to the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. The British gold sovereign has its roots in the English gold sovereign, a denomination that dates back centuries. The story of the 0.2354 ounce pieces we are looking at begins in 1817.

This denomination was introduced two decades prior to Queen Victoria's ascension to the throne on June 20th, 1837. Strangely, it marks not only the beginning of the "modern" sovereign, but the start point of the only two decades of issue we might claim are expensive. The kings who reigned from 1817 to 1837 are not forgotten men in Britain's history; but they never had the time Victoria had, and thus never built the larger-than-life image she still maintains today. Their sovereigns do tend to cost a bit.

All the way back there in 1817 the British sovereign contained 0.2354 troy ounces of gold, and was 0.917 fine, which is the same thing as 22 carat gold. This standard is one that continues even now, despite a wealth of higher grade gold bullion coins being marketed to the public and to metals traders and investors.

We've just mentioned that a young Victoria ascended to the throne in 1837, and even she probably didn't imagine she'd keep the position until 1901. The interesting connection for us is that gold sovereigns came out with her image on the obverse right from the get go, as her reign began. A river of them would flow out of the Royal mint over the decades, and there would even be gold sovereigns produced at branch Mints throughout the British Empire. For those of us interested in collecting this series today, this means that we have a lot of choices! Importantly, most of the dates are very reasonably priced.

Let's take a short detour, just so we might make a comparison between the gold sovereigns and some type of our own classic United States gold. The closest thing the U.S. has when we want to compare one of our own to the British sovereign is the \$5 gold half eagles. It wasn't long after Queen Victoria got the crown that we first unveiled the Liberty

*Continued on next page*



Head, or Coronet, half eagle design. Each contains 0.24187 ounces of gold, which makes them a tad heavier than the sovereigns. The gold in each \$5 half eagle is worth \$435.37 when gold trades at \$1,800 per ounce. The gold in a sovereign is worth \$423.72 when gold is at that price. Now

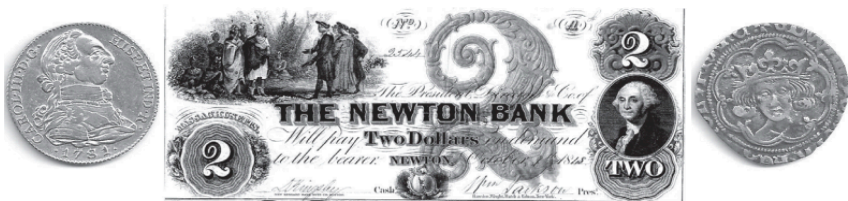
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let's look at the prices for which we can buy either one. The 1901-S Coronet half eagle is the most common of the entire run, from 1839 – 1908.

If we want one near or at MS-60 condition, we'll need to part with about \$600. If we look at the Victoria sovereigns, we find that we'll only have to part with about \$500 of our hard-earned dollars to snag one of the common dates. That's quite an impressive savings, should we choose to focus on the sovereigns.

Although we have looked at the Victorian era sovereigns, this gold piece was still being made, and still circulating, up to the beginning of the First World War. Paper money tended to replace it then, but not before both Edward VII and George V got their royal faces on the obverse. These too are quite affordable.

The sovereign took a long hiatus, before returning in 1957, and has now become a collector coin as well as an investor piece. The amount of gold has not changed, which means that sovereigns bearing Queen Elizabeth's image are at least as valuable as those of the rulers who came before her. As well, the Royal Mint is run by some sharp folks; and those people have realized that proof sovereigns made for the collector market are bound to have some appeal. Yes, these will cost more than those made without any special finish. But, what amazing coins they are.

For anyone who has never considered collecting sovereigns, the easiest way to start might be simply to put a toe in the water, as it were, and see about purchasing one per monarch. In the process of doing this, it can be fun to see what the oldest Victoria sovereign is that we can find for which there is no mark-up based on its age, at least when compared to more recent examples. From here, there are numerous ways to go at expanding a new collection, with a date run being only one.

The British sovereign may not be the gold coin that U.S. collectors look to first when it comes to collecting classic gold. But what a coin for making a historic and beautiful collection! ♦

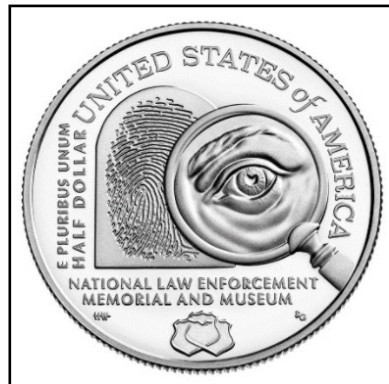
# My Own Personal American Hero

By Kevin Winn

**\*\*The views presented in this article are solely of the author and do not reflect those of the editors specifically or NENA generally.\*\***

The United States Mint has issued three coins commemorating The Fallen Law Enforcement Officers Monument and Museum in Washington, D.C. There is a clad 1/2 dollar, silver dollar, and \$5 gold coin in the offering. The Mint's website states, "The National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum's mission is to honor and commemorate the extraordinary service and sacrifice of America's law enforcement officers and serve as a bridge between past and present, as well as between peace officers and the public. It also works to increase public understanding and support for the law enforcement community while promoting safety."

Surcharges in the amount of \$5 for the clad half-dollar, \$10 for the silver dollar, and \$35 for each \$5 gold coin sold are authorized to be paid to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, Inc., for educational and outreach programs and exhibits.

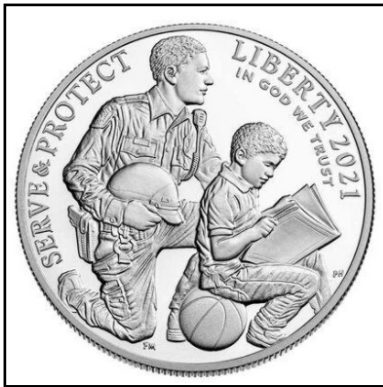


Figures 1 & 2 - The half dollar silver obverse and reverse designs



The coins are well done. The half dollar shows a sheriff's star on the obverse with the inscriptions "Serve and Protect," "Liberty, 2021," the "S" mint mark for San Francisco, and "In God We Trust." The reverse of the half dollar depicts an eye looking at a fingerprint through a magnifying glass. It also shows the emblem of the National Law Enforcement Museum and the inscriptions United States of America, E Pluribus Unum, Half Dollar, and National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum. (The images of all three coins shown here are from the Mint's website).

The obverse of the silver dollar shows a police officer kneeling next to a child who is sitting on a basketball while reading a book. The reverse depicts a handshake between an officer and a civilian. It has the same inscriptions as the half dollar except for the change in denomination and a "P" mintmark for Philadelphia.

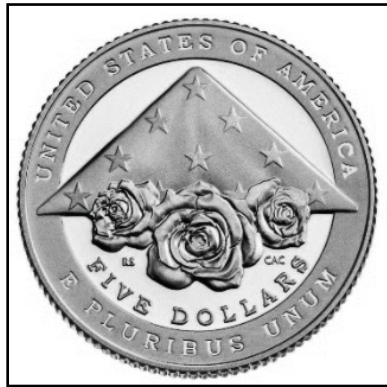


Figures 3 & 4 - The one dollar silver coin obverse and reverse designs

The gold five-dollar coin obverse shows the profiles of a male and a female officer standing and saluting and the reverse depicts a folded flag with three roses to symbolize remembrance. It also has similar inscriptions other than the denomination and the West Point, "W" mint mark.

Besides remembrance of our fallen officers, the symbolism of these commemorative coins honors the important way in which our law enforcement officers serve the community and how they build relationships with all citizens through trust and hard work. They show how these dedicated professionals seek to serve and protect all people of all back-

*Continued on next page*



Figures 5 & 6 - The 5 dollar gold coins Obverse and reverse designs

grounds and all generations and that they represent the human side of justice provided by not only the officers on the street but many others working hard behind the scenes.

The Fallen Law Enforcement Officers Monument holds the names of every officer killed in the line of duty etched in stone for posterity to see and to honor for their ultimate sacrifice. My uncle, John Joseph Winn Jr., is remembered there, but he will always be remembered in my own thoughts and prayers not only for his sacrifice but more so for the type of man he was and the life he lived before his time ran out.



Figure 7 - John Joseph Winn jr.  
(1912 - 1972)



Figure 8 - Uncle Joe and Aunt Rita

Uncle Joe (he was always called Joe because his father had the same name) was my father's older brother. He was my Godfather as well

as my uncle. He was a police officer in Lowell, Massachusetts for 30 years. The Winns were a family devoted to service. Another uncle, Fred Winn, was also a police officer in Lowell. My father, William Winn, was a Fire-fighter Lieutenant in Lowell; and their uncle, my great-uncle, Michael H. Winn, was the Superintendent of Police in Lowell before I was born.

They all lived to serve and to protect the citizens of Lowell. Uncle Joe gave his life for that cause while providing that service. On December



Figure 9 - Michael H. Winn (1946) - Superintendent of Lowell Police dept (1935 - 1949)

5th, 1969 he was walking his beat near downtown Lowell. He stopped to check the doors of a church as he had done every night for all those years while on that beat. But this time, two men waited for him in the dark with a tire iron and savagely beat him, knocking him cold, and leaving him for dead. But he wasn't dead, and he got up and walked and crawled his way to a diner where help was summoned. He was brought to a hospital and the emergency room doctors saved his life that night, but he was never the same after that and he never fully recovered. He passed away from his injuries 2 ½ years later on May 5th, 1971.

The two men who beat him were captured later the same night trying to rob a liquor store with the gun that they had stolen from Uncle Joe. They both served time in prison for assaulting a police officer and other charges, but they were never brought to trial for his murder because he did not die within a year and a day of the assault as the law stipulated

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at that time. The two assailants led different lives after they were released from prison. One was somewhat rehabilitated, although people who knew him say that he never really changed and still had a violent streak to his nature till the day he died. He got married, had kids, and became a counselor helping convicts like himself re-adjust to society once they finished serving their time. The other didn't change or pretend to change. He had a girlfriend whom he beat on a regular basis until she couldn't take it anymore. She shot him dead one night with his own illegal weapon while he slept.

I remember my Uncle Joe even though I was a young man when he died. He was the typical Irish cop who could tell a story and share a laugh with anyone he met. He was tough, fair, and honest. Whenever he visited our family, he and my father could hold forth for hours just talking about their experiences both as children and adults growing up in Lowell.

Joe was a devoted family man, raising four children, while faithfully married to my Aunt Rita. He started his career as policeman in Lowell in 1941 and died thirty years later, on May 3rd, 1971 from his injuries. Coincidentally, the Mint scheduled the coins to begin shipping on May 6th, 2021 exactly 50 years plus three days since my uncle's death.



Figure 10 - Lowell police memorial

The wall in Washington D.C. honors our fallen Law Enforcement heroes. Regrettably, every year new names are etched into the stone and

*Continued on next page*





Figure 19 - A section of the Massachusetts Law Enforcement Memorial depicting "John J. Winn" in upper left

remembered with a solemn ceremony and laudatory speeches. But those close to someone remembered at that site will never forget their sacrifice.

Uncle Joe is also remembered in two other places. There is a Massachusetts Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation (MLEMF) which built and maintains a memorial to all their officers killed in the line of duty. The memorial is located at 24 Beacon Street in downtown Boston, Mass., not far from the Massachusetts State House. There is also a breathtaking statue outside the City Hall in Lowell, Mass., dedicated to the four police officers serving that community who have been killed in the line of duty over the years, including Uncle Joe. That statue shows an officer standing with his hand on a young child's shoulder signifying the dedication and protection provided by officers. The Lowell statue was designed by famed numismatic medalist and sculptor, Mico Kaufman, who lived and worked nearby in Tewksbury, MA.

The Memorial and Museum dedicated to our fallen Law Enforcement Officers in Washington D.C. honor Uncle Joe and thousands of others in a tangible and permanent way; just as the State memorial in Boston and the statue in Lowell honors Uncle Joe and the other officers who gave their lives to protect and to serve the people of Lowell, Massachusetts.

It's a shame that so many officers have died in the line of duty,

but it is also a sad reality of life. The monuments are beautifully sculpted and maintained. The coins released this year from the Mint are also wonderfully designed and thoughtfully planned as a financial resource for the monument in Washington. But those are small honors for these heroes who have given their all to serve and protect us. The statues are places where family and friends can gather and remember and pray for those heroes and the coins are small tokens which can be bought, given, or exchanged in their memory, including the memory of my godfather and uncle, John Joseph Winn Jr., one hero whom I will never forget. ◇

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# Counterfeiting New England Bank Notes Early Engravers Temptation

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By Russell Easterbrooks

(This first section of this article appeared in Nena News in 2002.)



Figure 1 - This is an example of a counterfeit note from the Claremont Bank in Claremont, New Hampshire.

The thousands of obsolete New England bank notes issued between 1830 - 60 offer one of the most interesting and unexplored fields for collectors, historians, and students of engraving. The multitude of different illustrations or vignettes represents some of the finest engraving during this period. Some of these engravers however succumbed to the temptation of applying their skill to the fabrication of forging notes.

One such engraver was Christian Meadows. Known as a fine craftsman who during his life was considered the most accomplished engraver in New England. Meadows' early apprenticeship was as an engraver of bank notes for W. W. Wilson, located in Boston. His early life before this employment, around 1846, is unknown, yet his later work included prints, silversmith work, and decorative firearms engraving. Stauffer's standard book of American prints and their engravers describes Christian

*Continued on next page*

Meadows as an engraver of portraits and views in business at Windsor Vermont, between 1850-55.

My first discovery of his work was a rare print displaying the Dartmouth College Campus signed; Engd. by C. Meadows. The origin of this print is described by a document in the Dartmouth college library:

*“We, the undersigned, members of Dartmouth College, do hereby associate ourselves together in joint copartnership for the purpose of publishing an engraving to be entitled, Dartmouth College to be executed on copper, and we hereby pledge ourselves to defray all expenses that may be incurred in obtaining, and to share all profits that may accrue from the sale of the same, jointly and equally. In witness whereof we have this fourteenth day of June in the year of our lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one, set our hands and seals:”*

*- E.T. Quinby, Geo. W. Gardner, Charles Caverno*

Initial inquiries made in Boston by this group revealed that the best known engraver for such a project was in a Windsor Vermont prison because of a small matter of counterfeiting. Vermont prison records indicate Christian Meadows was indeed a prisoner, number 1,348 and was confined from June 22, 1850 until July 4, 1853. His description at that time was: “Thirty-six years old, five feet eleven inches tall, brown hair, light complexion, born in England.” Circumstances regarding Meadows’ imprisonment revealed the theft of, “bank notes and dies from the plant of W.W. Wilson” for whom Meadows was employed.

A few months later Meadows was suspected of passing counterfeit West River Bank notes by a cashier of a Wells River bank. Meadows was arrested some days later in Groton, Vermont by a Caledonia County Sheriff. Evidence seized at his and nearby residence included: two presses, a supply of blank copper plates and three boxes containing one hundred thirty-five dies of bank names and banknote vignettes, many of which had been stolen from the Wilson plant in Boston.

While serving his sentence the “accommodating” superintendent at the Windsor prison, Henry Harlow, allowed Meadows, in the charge

of a guard, to travel to the Dartmouth College campus to make drawings, and upon returning to the prison was allowed to engrave the plate for the print. It seems Meadows' finished print was viewed by a number of people including Dr. John Walker of the New Hampshire Agricultural Society, who it so happens was engaged in finding an engraver to do the work for the society's diploma.

Upon talking with Meadows, he agreed to perform the work. So a drawing was supplied by D.G. Lamont, an artist who resided near the birthplace of Daniel Webster. Lamont's drawing included the elm tree on the Webster birthplace, with the lettering "Webster Elm" on the trunk. Once the diplomas were printed, one was sent to Daniel Webster then Secretary of the State under President Fillmore.

Webster was impressed with the engraving and wrote to the society: "This is a true resemblance of the tree at my birthplace. Who is the engraver that has done this? Where does he dwell? I have been searching for such a man. We want him at the State Department to engrave Maps".

Webster received Meadows' entire story, prompting him to write Vermont Governor Williams, asking him to pardon Meadows and stating "Why do you bury your best talents in your state prisons?" Governor Williams replied that "he did not feel justified in granting the requested pardon." The next year new Vermont Governor Erastus Fairbanks reviewed Webster's letter and reopened the matter. After an investigation Governor Fairbanks set the date of July 4 on which to pardon Meadows.

Now a free man Christian Meadows settled down in Windsor and resumed his work as an engraver. Unfortunately Daniel Webster had died, spoiling Meadows' chance to work for the United States State Department. To date no list of Meadows engraving work has been undertaken. In addition to the Dartmouth College print, Meadows' work includes prints of the Appleton Academy, the Female Seminary of Granville New York, the Thetford Vermont Academy, and the Barre Vermont Academy.

He is known to have done portraits of Jeremy Belknap, a promi-

*Continued on next page*

nent Massachusetts clergyman and Reverend David Merrill of Peacham, Vermont. Meadows also worked in silver at the shop of Roswell Bailey where he engraved coffin plates and other silver items. He also worked in nearby Woodstock, at the Firearms Company of N. Woodbury. After 1859 all traces of Meadows were lost. An article in the Granite Monthly of 1880 by Dr. Nesmith states “I have seen about Windsor and Hanover many trophies of the genius of Meadows. He died some years ago.”

Other than the West River Bank notes cited in the court records, it is doubtful other notes counterfeited by Meadows will ever be discovered. Many counterfeit notes were counterstamped COUNTERFEIT by banks who discovered them. Collectors today avidly collect counterfeit notes, which often sell for more than originals! Christian Meadows’ life is an obscure bit of history that can only add to the romance of collecting New England banknotes.

The Rest of the Story: by Roland Rollins in 2021

Unsurprisingly, another author wrote about Christian Meadows’ compelling story. Paul Heller published an article in The Ephemera Journal, (Volume 15, Number 2) in January 2013 titled “Vermont’s Finest Engraver: Prisoner Number 1348”. This article adds more information.

About William W. Wilson: From a previous article I wrote for the IBNS Journal “Printers’ Test Notes - A Primer”: “What banknote printer with test notes was convicted of forging banknotes”?

William W. Wilson established himself as an engraver and printer in the 1830s, eventually founding his own firm, William W. Wilson Engraving and Printing. Wilson was arrested in 1853 in Boston for counterfeiting Merchants Bank of Boston and Tradesmans’ Bank banknotes.

An owner of a rival firm named Pelton and Alderman Isaac Cary of the New England Bank Note Company testified against Wilson. He was held for \$17,000 bail, quickly defaulted and was committed to jail. His only known test note, WW-101 has dimensions of 260 by 419mm and was last sold at auction for \$2,000.



Figure 2 - Paul Heller's photograph (May 2012) of the house in Groton, Vermont where Christian and Elizabeth Meadows lived while planning their counterfeit scheme

Information about the arrest came from The Bankers Magazine and Statistical Register, (Volume 7 1853). I have since found two varieties of Wilson's test note, the only difference being the company address. The first address for the firm was 23 Court Street and the second 17 Doane Street, both in Boston. Wilson's \$17,000 bail would amount to roughly \$603,500 2021, which made bail difficult. It is not known how long Mr. Wilson was incarcerated, but a Boston directory for 1862 still

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Figure 2. “North American Printers Promotional Sheets & Test Notes” catalog # WW-101a

shows Wilson at 17 Doane Street.

One wonders who started the life of crime first, Christian Meadows or William W. Wilson? Meadows was jailed in 1850 while Wilson was jailed in 1853, the year Meadows was released. Was Wilson lured by easy money of counterfeiting after the loss of plates to Meadows?

Heritage Auctions, who sold the Court Street version, noted: “The vignettes copy those created by engravers from the same period, including Putnam’s Escape, and several vignettes that are observed on spurious notes.” The Putnam’s Escape vignette Heritage is referring to is the mounted soldier to the right of the Boston address. So Wilson was “borrowing” vignettes from other engravers and some of the vignettes were used on spurious notes. Like Russell Easterbrooks, I love this period of banknote history. So many printers produced wonderful notes with great vignettes for any bank that wanted to issue their own notes. The question remains, for the spurious notes, why chance counterfeiting an existing note when you can make up your own bank?

It seems clear there was a den of thieves at the firm of William W. Wilson. No small wonder Christian Meadows succumbed to temptation for easy money. ♦



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# The Last Dollar

By C. John Ferreri

The note shown here (front & back) was notable, at least to its owner, as it caused him to ponder for a moment the journey he was taking. The inscription reads: "The last dollar left, of the \$40 given me by my father as I bid him goodbye forever, on starting for the West."

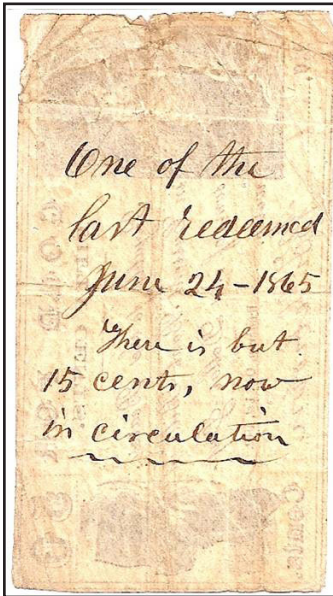
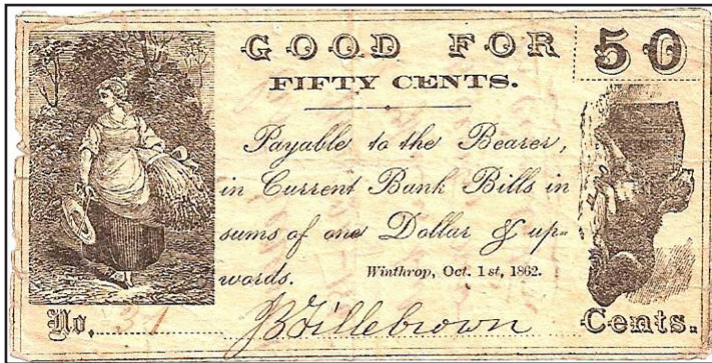
-H.G.P. - March 24, 1855



Collectors of older paper money know what it is like to find a personal note written on the backs of paper money. The backs of these old bills from the obsolete era (1800-1865) were most often left blank offering the holder a nice piece of paper on which to write a note. They were left that way simply because it cost more to print something on the backs and in those days the banks had to pay to print their own paper money! Some banks or merchants that circulated paper money during these times did decorate the backs with designs that may or may not have related to the front.

On occasion, the modern collector might come across a bill with a notation or message on the back that seems humorous today but was meaningful when placed there. Other times it could have chronicled an event that either the holder of the note or the note itself had recently experienced. Such is the event of a melancholy nature described above on the note from Irasburgh, Vermont.



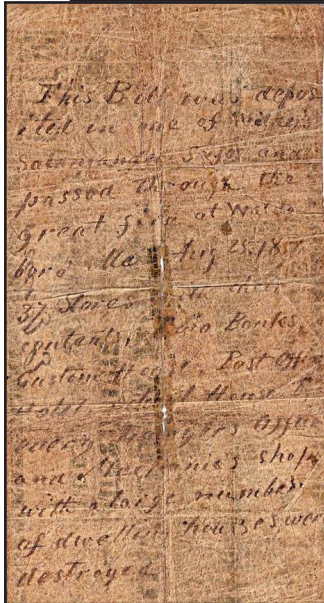
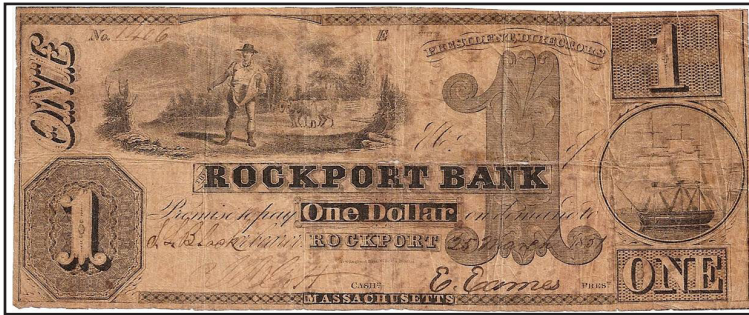


Shown here is a piece of merchant scrip of 1865 from Winthrop, Maine or Massachusetts (state not indicated) issued when hard money was not available. Many merchants chose to do this to mitigate the effects of the lack of hard money on their businesses. These pieces of scrip were redeemed and this merchant, J.B. Gillebrown made a notation on the back of this piece that with its redemption, only 15 cents of his private notes remained in circulation.

Many merchants in rural New England kept their own books. The proprietor of this store, which issued scrip, kept track of the paper he previously issued. New England bankers and merchants had a reputation to preserve. They could be trusted, in most cases, to do the “right” thing for their customers so no one would feel they had been taken advantage of.

This note survived the great Waldoboro fire on August 25th, 1854 and on its back was chronicled the destruction it witnessed. The inscription reads: “This bill was deposited in one of Wilder’s Salamander Safes and passed through the great fire of Waldoboro, Maine August 25, 1854. Thirty-seven stores and their contents, two banks, custom house, post office, Hotel (unreadable) House, the telegraph office and mechanic’s

*Continued on next page*



shops with a large number of dwelling houses were destroyed”. The Salamander Safe lived up to its hype as being fire proof.

Rockport is a small, rocky seaport town in Massachusetts, above Gloucester on the tip of Cape Ann. The Rockport Bank issued some of the rarest obsolete Massachusetts notes. Only about a half dozen examples of distinct denominations of the bank’s total issues are known. This one, shown above, had the good fortune to have been locked in a safe in Waldoboro, Maine the day that town burned down and was found and kept as a souvenir of that tragic event. The holder of the bill outlined

the destruction caused by the fire on the back of this bill, one of the last surviving dollars known from this bank.

A paper money collector often has as much enjoyment finding these bits of local history on the backs of obsolete paper money finds as they do acquiring elusive pieces of paper money prevalent from the mid-1800s in small out-of-the-way New England towns.

The above three notes offer the collector a peek into everyday life of people of a past century and what they had to deal with in order to survive. To learn and hear more about paper money, visit the Currency Club of New England at one of its meetings in Waltham. Meeting information may be found on the “Club Meetings” page at the rear of this booklet. ◇



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# The Yacht America

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By Walt Weigand

Prince Albert, consort to Queen Victoria, conceived of an international fair to highlight progress in science, industry and commerce. After several years of planning, the Great Exhibition of 1851 opened in May at the Crystal Palace, London. Manufacturers and inventors from around the world displayed their products and innovations to large crowds.

In New York at William Brown's East River shipyard George Steers, a young marine architect, designed and supervised the construction of a racing yacht for a syndicate of New York Yacht Club members. They planned to sail it to England for the Great Exhibition where they hoped to win cash bets against sporting yachtsmen. Brown built America on speculation, expecting to be paid \$30,000 only if it could beat another NY competitor. While it lost in a close race with a local racing sloop, America was judged more seaworthy than the victor, so Brown agreed on a discounted \$20,000 price. If beaten again in England after further tuning, he agreed to return the prize to the syndicate.

After crossing the Atlantic, America stopped at Le Havre, France, where she was repainted and prepared for racing. She then sailed across the English Channel to the Royal Yacht Squadron's (RYS) anchorage off the village of Cowes on the Isle of Wight. The RYS's August Regatta of 1851 featured a week of races among members' with the final race on Friday the 22nd being "open to Yachts belonging to the Clubs of all Nations...". By that time, America had gained a reputation for superior speed, but the NYYC group had been unable to find anyone willing to race for a cash prize. Not wanting to leave without a race, the New York group entered America in the Friday event.



The final race of the week was a 53-mile clockwise circuit of the Isle of Wight. Fifteen British yachts, both schooners and cutters, were at the starting line, with some of the owners having been cajoled or shamed into entering the event. America was the only foreign entry. Thousands of spectators lined the shore and the decks of yachts and passenger steamers in nearby waters. When the starting gun sounded at 10am, the NYYC boat got off to a slow start but around noontime, with an increasing wind had pulled ahead of all others at the backside of the island. At a little after 8:30 pm America finished well ahead of second-place Aurora, which was seen an estimated 7 miles behind a few hours earlier.

Aboard the royal yacht Victoria and Albert, Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the Prince of Wales watched from near the finish line. A well-known tale, likely a myth, has Her Majesty asking which yacht was second to which a seaman responded “Madam, there is no second”. The Royal Yacht Squadron prize to the winner was an ornate silver trophy informally referred to at the time as the “Hundred Guinea Cup” and which now is called the “America’s Cup”.

In the 1850s, two US banks issued banknotes with the yacht prominently featured. A \$5 note of The Astor Bank of New York City has America at its central vignette and a portrait of her designer George Steers at the lower right. In New Jersey, the Hoboken City Bank used the same vignette when it issued a \$5 note a few years later.

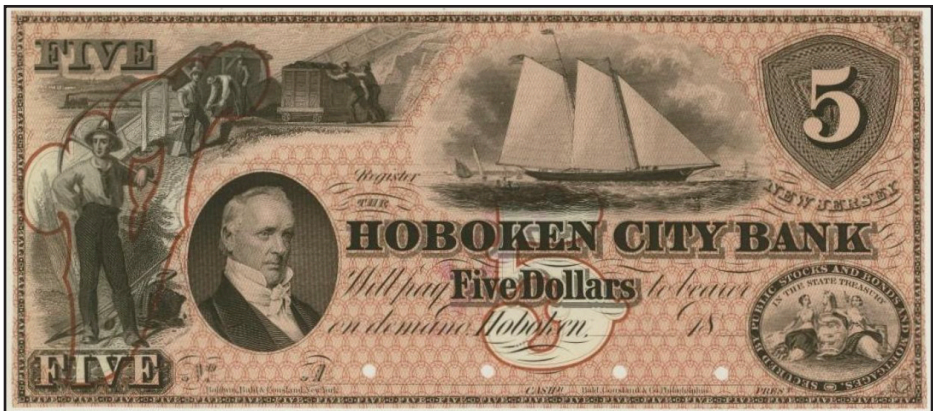


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Following his success with America, George Steers left Brown's yard. Joining with his older brother James, the brothers established a shipyard on the East River where they built the well-known wooden steamship Adriatic, among others. George died in 1856 when he was thrown from his wagon when his team of horses ran away. He was just 37 years of age.

America's history is fully detailed in John Rousmaniere's 1986 book, *The Low Black Schooner: Yacht America 1851 – 1945*. After its successful 1851 race, the schooner had a long and varied career. Initially sold in Britain and changing owners several times, the yacht left England under new ownership in 1860 and in early 1861 was sold to the Confederate States of America. Serving briefly as a Confederate blockade runner in Florida waters, in 1862 she was scuttled near Jacksonville to avoid capture. Raised, repaired and armed, she served in the Union blockade service and then as a Naval Academy training vessel. She was purchased from the Navy in 1873 by Benjamin F. Butler, the former Civil War general and future Governor of Massachusetts, and was passed down in his family until 1917 when it was sold again. In 1921, the ship was donated back to the US Naval Academy. However, it was not well-maintained and quickly began decaying. The historic vessel effectively met a crushing end in 1942 when her heavily snow-laden storage shed collapsed. ♦



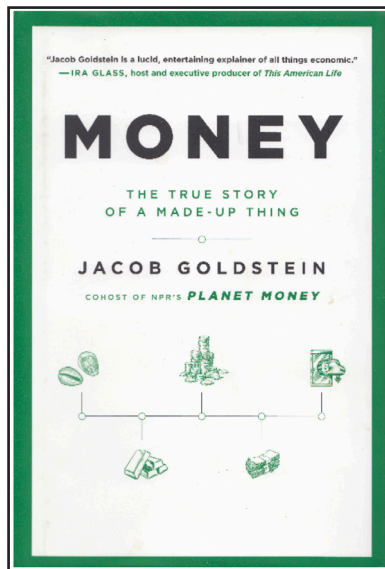
# Book Review

## Money: The True Story of a Made-Up Thing by Jacob Goldstein

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By: Charles Derby

Jacob Goldstein's little book about money is a delight. Goldstein, a natural and experienced storyteller who co-hosts NPR's Planet Money, offers 16 chapters that span humanity's economic history. Readers will devour in short order this 226 page book that is organized into five sections, including coverage of Inventing Money, Inventing Capitalism, and



21st Century Money. Goldstein sets his hook with his first words, a quotation from his Aunt Janet, an economist who explained the vanishing of trillions of dollars in the 2008 financial collapse by saying that “Money is fiction, it was never there in the first place.” Goldstein illustrates the pitfalls of a barter system with the story of Mademoiselle Zelig, a French

*Continued on next page*

singer who in 1860 did a gig in a South Pacific Island that was so enthusiastically received by the locals that she earned “3 pigs, 23 turkeys, 44 hens, 5000 coconuts, 1200 pineapples, 120 bushels of bananas, 120 pumpkins, and 1500 oranges.” Mademoiselle Zélie’s dilemma was what to do with this “local money” before sailing on to the next show. These stories about ancient Greece, Marco Polo, Genghis Khan, John Law, Edmund Halley (of comet fame), and the Spice Islands inform us about the origins of money.

Goldstein explains the gold standard and central banks, recounts the origin and history of the euro, explains the new oddities surrounding bit-coin and digital currencies, and speculates about what the future of money may hold. My interest in obsolete paper money attracted me to Goldstein’s discussion of the number of different types of banknotes in circulation in the United States around the time of the Civil War – 8,370 according to his sources.

The sheer madness of an economy based on such money is told by a traveler at that time going from Kentucky to Virginia, who “started home with the Kentucky money...at Maysville, wanted Virginia money, couldn’t get it. At Wheeling exchanged \$50 note, Kentucky money, for notes of the North Western Bank of Virginia; reached Fredericktown; there neither Virginia nor Kentucky money current; paid a \$5 Wheeling note for breakfast and dinner; received in change two \$1 notes of some Pennsylvania bank, \$1 Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and balance in Good Intent shinplasters; 100 yards from the tavern door all notes refused except the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.” Goldstein offers many other stories, facts, ideas, and information on a range of topics related to numismatics. I encourage everyone to read *Money* till the end, if for no other reason than the last sentence.

All numismatists will love it! ♦

# The Dysfunctional Imperial Family at Home and Abroad

---

By: James C. Johnston Jr.

The Romans believed in “Family Values” much as conservative American politicians say they do and like today, those words ring hollow. The most common imperial theme was not, do unto others as you would have them do unto you, but do unto others as you would have them do unto you, but just do it first!

Like Caligula, Nero, and Commodus, many emperors were good for the odd laugh, but not if you were a family member who drew their ire. These emperors killed a fair number of their relatives for numerous reasons. Nero killed his cousin and co-heir because, according to Suetonius and Robert Graves, he didn’t like his coughing fits. Caligula killed his sister and lover Drusilla and Nero killed his mother, who was Caligula’s sister, and then stomped his wife to death in a moment of pique.

But one of the more interesting dysfunctional imperial families was that of Septimus Severus whose reign spanned from 193 to 211 CE. Born into a good family in North Africa, he quickly rose through the ranks of the military and entered the higher Imperial civil service. A number of high political offices followed, from which he ascended to the imperial throne. He enjoyed the support of the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus. As much as Marcus Aurelius was admired, Commodus was despised for his lack of gravitas and propriety. After all, Commodus fought in the Colosseum, which was considered most undignified and un-emperor-like. After Commodus’ assassination in 193 CE a mad rush for power, called the “Year of Five Emperors” followed.

Septimus Severus tossed Emperor Didius Julianus, who came soon after Commodus, out on his ear, before taking on both Pescennius

*Continued on next page*



Figures 1 & 2 - Denarius of Septimius (Obverse and Reverse)

Niger and Clodius Albinus, clearing his path to the imperial throne. As a martial emperor, Septimus Severus enjoyed the enthusiastic support of his troops, whom he rewarded richly for their loyalty. Severus loved military life and added eight Roman legions. These additions brought Roman military strength to an astounding thirty-three legions in all. By some estimates, the two million men served Rome under these 33 Imperial Eagles. Severus saw himself as an expander of the Empire, and with significant public support he turned Rome into a military dictatorship and celebrated his greatness on the coinage of the Empire.

Among Rome's most implacable foes were the Parthians. Severus's victory brought him glory, a triumph, and a memorial arch in Rome commissioned by a grateful Roman Senate. While Septimus Severus was playing soldier, he needed a strong hand in the capital keeping everybody in line. To govern in his place, Severus appointed Gaius Fulvius Plautianus. Plautianus was Prefect of the Praetorian Guard, a body of soldiers which in this era made and unmade Roman Emperors. Severus purged the Guard and installed men he could trust.

Plautianus was ambitious, and loved power. He even managed to marry his daughter to Severus' son, co-ruler, and heir, Caracalla. Eventually his power grew almost as great as the emperor's, but his dangerous ambition was recognized by Severus' loyal brother who denounced Plautianus on his deathbed in 205 CE. Consequently, Severus had Plautianus killed. After all, an emperor couldn't be too careful. It was rumored that





Figure 3 - Marble bust of Plautianus

Septimus' son Caracalla was planning to kill and usurp his father. To placate them, Septimus Severus tried to bind his sons to him by including them in ruling the empire, but they grew restless and wanted more power. Septimus even made them co-heirs and rulers in his will. He told his sons, Caracalla and Geta, "Be harmonious, enrich the troops, and trust not all other folk who after all were not family!".



Figures 4 & 5 - Tetrachm of Caracalla (Obverse and Reverse)

It was during his last campaign in Magna Britannia that Severus gave his boys this advice, but Caracalla had other ideas, and plotted his royal coup. But fate took over and Severus died without Caracalla's help in 211 CE. At Caracalla's prompting, Severus was made a God by the Senate of Rome. By becoming a God, an emperor who had sailed too close to the sun could be spared Hades' wrath. By pushing deification,

*Continued on next page*

Caracalla appeared the pinnacle of filial devotion.

However, the Christians would not honor Severus as a God, which made them traitors as well as heretics with dangerous anti-imperial views. Such people were very dangerous to the security of the state, and had to be dealt with harshly.. But attempts to do so were token at best.

Severus' dream of his sons ruling together in peace was not to be a reality. Geta was a young man of 22 when his father died. He was made an Augustus in 209 C and it would not have been unusual for him to have been second in command of the military.. However, it was to his older brother that the legions looked for leadership and Caracalla did not like sharing power. The Roman propaganda machine had sold the idea of a perfect Severian imperial family for years. Even the boys' mother and adviser Julia Domina thought all was well until they began to publicly argue over policy and appointments. The myth of a happy imperial family, painstakingly crafted by Severus, was shattered by the grim reality of this discord.



Figure 6 - Julia Domina Aureus (Obverse)

In a failed assassination attempt at the great public Saturnalian festival in 211 CE, Caracalla attempted to murder Geta.. Caracalla then bribed the centurions guarding his mother's apartments, to do the deed. It was there, where Geta felt most safe, that he was at last murdered. Caracalla then made a clean sweep of all of his real and imagined enemies by killing upwards of 20,000 people. Caracalla was now emperor, free to rule as he wished.

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# Club Meetings

**Berkshire Coin Club**, Meets at the Berkshire Museum, 39 South St., Pittsfield MA. on the fourth Sunday of the month at 2 PM. September-May. For information (413) 499-1400

**Blackstone Valley Coin & Collectibles Club**, Uxbridge Progressive Club, 18 Whitin St., Uxbridge, MA 01569, Every third Tuesday except July & August. Doors open 6:00PM, Meeting 7:00-9:00PM. Auction every month For info call Michael McDonald 774-280-4333

**Boston Numismatic Society**, Trinity Church, 730 Main St., Waltham, MA. Meetings second Tuesday, Sept. - June, 7:30 P.M. For information call 617 244-1972 (Colony Coin) or e-mail to bosnumsoc@yahoo.com

**Central Connecticut Coin Club**, South Windsor Public Library, Sullivan Ave., South Windsor, CT. Meetings every month on the first Tuesday. For information: Gene Forte (860) 290-1522

**Collectors Club of Boston**: Meetings fourth Tuesday, Sept.-June, 7:00 P.M. Trinity Church, 730 Main St., Waltham, MA. For information (781) 938-8167 or email [williamharkins@comcast.net](mailto:williamharkins@comcast.net) .

**Currency Club of New England**: Trinity Church, 730 Main St., Waltham, MA; Meetings all at 7:30 P.M. the first Monday, Oct.-June, except for September the second Monday of the month. For information Kevin Lafond, P.O. Box 4724, Portsmouth, NH 03802-4724, email [kglafond@comcast.net](mailto:kglafond@comcast.net) or phone (603) 498-2042

**Gateway Coin Club**, Ballard Hill Community Center, Corner Pleasant and Main Streets, Lincoln, ME. Meetings first Tuesday, 7 P.M. For information (207) 794-6833

**Gorham Coin Club**, Meets at the Scarborough Veterans Home, 290 U.S. Route 1 Scarborough, ME at 7:00 P.M. on the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of every month. For Information contact Alysia Williams phone (207) 408-1868 or email at [blackbeltwizard@yahoo.com](mailto:blackbeltwizard@yahoo.com)

**Coin Club of Greater New Bedford**: Meetings fourth Tuesday, 6 P.M. at the Acushnet Public Library, 232 Middle Rd., Acushnet, MA 02743 For information Patrick Curran, President, P.O. Box 2991, New Bedford, MA 02741. Shows on 5th Sundays at VFW Poirier Post 3260, 281 Appleton St., New Bedford, MA or visit us on the web at [www.ccgncb.com](http://www.ccgncb.com)

**Mansfield Numismatic Society**, Mansfield Center Library, (Route 89) 54 Warrenville Road, Mansfield Center, CT. Meeting 4th Monday Sept. through April (except Dec.) 7:30 P.M. For info [www.MansfieldNumismaticSociety.org](http://www.MansfieldNumismaticSociety.org) or call John (860) 429-6970 (6-9 P.M.).

**Nashua Coin Club**, Nashua Public Library, 2 Court Street, Nashua, NH. Meetings second Wednesday 7 P.M., except October. [www.nashuacoinclub.org](http://www.nashuacoinclub.org)

**Newport County Coin Club**, Meetings the second Tuesday of the month, 6:30 P.M. at the 2nd floor conference room, Stop & Shop, 199 Connell Highway, 401-845-2220, (Near Wal-Mart), Newport RI. For information contact Carlton Johnson email: [Carltonjr@aol.com](mailto:Carltonjr@aol.com)

**Sterling Coin Club**. Meetings the 1st Friday of every month at 6:30PM. Sterling Town Hall, Main St. (Rte 62) Sterling, MA. For info contact [tbavosi@HrsRevCycle.com](mailto:tbavosi@HrsRevCycle.com)

**Oxford Nipmuc Coin Club**, Meetings the 4th Wednesday of each month at the Oxford senior Center, 323 Main St., Oxford, MA. For info [lisirichard15@Yahoo.com](mailto:lisirichard15@Yahoo.com)

**Pawcatuck Valley Coin Club**, Pawcatuck Valley Coin Club; Meeting on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 P.M, Westerly Senior Center, 39 State St., Westerly, RI 02891- Information at [www.pawcatuckvalleycoinclub.com/](http://www.pawcatuckvalleycoinclub.com/)

**Southbridge Coin & Stamp Club**, Sturbridge Coffee House, 407B Main St., Sturbridge, MA. Meetings at 7:30PM on the third Friday of each month, For info contact Mark [gluemark@gmail.com](mailto:gluemark@gmail.com)

**Stoneham Coin Club**, United Methodist Church, 273 Vernon Street, Wakefield, MA. Meetings on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6 to 8 PM. Auctions on the second meeting of the month. For info, contact Jim Keefe (Cell: 781-420-9997, Home 781-620-0502).

**West Springfield Coin Club**, Church of the Good Shepherd, Elm Street, West Springfield, MA. Meetings second Sunday, September - June, 7 P.M.

**Worcester County Numismatic Society**, St Joseph's Hall, 8 Central St., Auburn, MA. Meetings second Friday, September - June, 7:00 P.M. Doors open 6 pm. YN meeting @ 6:15. For information: Mike Simpson at 508-667-9968 or WCNS, PO Box 1079, Douglas, MA 01516 or [www.worcestercoinclub.org](http://www.worcestercoinclub.org)

*To list club meetings and activities in upcoming issues of NENA NEWS, send information along with your name, title and telephone number to: [NenaNews@NenaCoin.org](mailto:NenaNews@NenaCoin.org)*

Caracalla's reign was considered an abomination. During his six years in power, he granted many individuals their citizenship, just so he could tax them. Originally, Roman citizenship was considered a great prize, but by Caracalla's time it was viewed as more of a burden. Still, conservative Romans resented the fact that "Barbarians" were granted this status, just for The Emperor's financial reasons.

A well-paid army is a happy army and to help pay them, the empire's silver coins were gradually debased by twenty-five percent. Caracalla's longest lasting creation was his massive bath complex, named the "Baths of Caracalla". Incidentally, it was also the most popular thing he did with all classes of citizens enjoying a relaxing afternoon in the baths.

Rumors of Geta's mysterious death abounded, and Nobody really knew how or why the young co-emperor had died. Caracalla finally issued a statement that Geta was planning to kill him, and that his murder of Geta was in self-defense. But a lot of Romans had lost family and friends to Caracalla's bloody purge and were now growing restive and resentful. The imperial coinage offered glimpses into this world of intrigue to the average Roman. A citizen could tell who was in and who was out by what coins were circulating and what coinage was being phased out.

In an obvious bid for their loyalty, Caracalla again raised the pay of the common soldier to its highest ever level. When he restarted the Parthian war,, they willingly marched off to the east with him for an opportunity for glory. Like his father, Caracalla lived for war. On April 8, 217 CE, Caracalla stopped to answer the call of nature by the side of the road, when he was stabbed by one of his men, Julius Martialis. It seems that a few days earlier, Caracalla had ordered the execution of this soldier's brother on some unspecified charge.

Julius cut Caracalla down before he could make a move to defend himself. The imperial guard immediately killed Julius. One theory posits that the prefect of the Praetorian Guard Macrinus compelled Julius to kill Caracalla, as he subsequently became emperor, though his reign was

*Continued on next page*



short. He was killed the following year, and succeeded by another member of the Severus Family, Elagabalus. Elagabalus' reign lasted only four years before he was succeeded by the last member of the family to rule, Alexander Severus. Alexander actually lasted thirteen years before dying in 235 CE.



Figures 7 & 8 - Aureus of Macrinus (Obverse and Reverse)

Maybe you think that your family is a bit dysfunctional, but when you do, just reflect on Severus and his boys. Luckily for numismatists, a fair number of coins were minted and still exist of the not-so-loving Severan Family. A nice group would make a truly interesting collection for less than a thousand dollars. Or you can opt for the more involved route of collecting all the bronze and gold issues as well. After all, unlike the Severans, you still have a lot of life left! ♦

### **Important message for authors:**

The ideal formats for Nena News to accept manuscripts are: "Word" document for text and "jpg" for images. There are other formats we can often convert from but "pdf" format is not easily converted to something compatible for this publication. Manuscripts in "pdf" format should be sent only to show the location where graphics are to be placed.

Please send "Word" documents and jpgs to:  
John Ferreri P.O. Box #33 Storrs, CT 06268

# **Urgently Needed For Nena News!**

Articles wanted for publication  
by Nena member authors!

The last issue saw the largest amount of member participation in many, many years. Eight to nine articles and the new column, “Junk Box Reporter” caused the past few issues on the “News” to reach 48-56 pages from a nadir of about 24 pages three years ago. This was a welcomed development but did empty our reserve of future articles and “Junk Box Reporter” notices.

We are asking both senior and junior members to contribute by penning a short article or two each year so we can continue to share with our other members and clubs, what we like to talk and write about. A quick perusal through the pages of some of the back- issues should inform one of the various topics that could be enjoyed by the rest of us.

While we appreciate receiving articles of some length (3-6 pages) smaller articles would also do nicely. The column, “Junk Box Reporter” has been attractive to readers reporting unusual or numismatic finds of value in strange places or under strange circumstances. Everyone seems to have a short story that would fit into this column.

Now that the Covid-19 pandemic seems to be on the wane, you may find you have time to write about your numismatic experiences. If so, perhaps trying a little authoring for your regional newsletter will appear to be attractive to you. Submitting your paper as a Word doc and any images as jpgs is helpful. We are always here to help and will gladly try to guide you through any attempt at writing an article for us! For help or information please contact me at [johnnybanknote@yahoo.com](mailto:johnnybanknote@yahoo.com). Additional contact information may be found on page #3 of Nena News.

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